GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:201
ANSWERED ON:11.03.2016
Prevention From Myopia
Gaikwad Dr. Sunil Baliram;Kirtikar Shri Gajanan Chandrakant

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether as per recent research, half of the world"s population is likely to be affected by myopia (short-sightedness) by 2050, leading to risk of blindness, if so, the details therof;

(b) whether the cases of myopia has increased manifolds since 2000, in India, if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the preventive steps taken/ proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
(SHRI JAGAT PRAKASH NADDA)

(a) to (c): A statement is laid on the Table of the House

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 201* FOR 11TH MARCH, 2016

(a) to (c): A recent research article published in American Academy of Ophthalmology Journal, by Holden etal, (2016) has predicted that there will be 4,758 million people with myopia (49.8% of the world population) and 938 million people with high myopia (9.8% of the world population) by 2050. This publication is an extrapolation of published data from large number of countries including countries with high prevalence of myopia like Singapore, Korea, Taiwan and China. These countries have a high prevalence of myopia due to environmental factors particularly lifestyle changes, such as decreased time spent outdoors and increased activities including seeing objects at a close distance like using laptops, computers and video games and longer reading hours. ICMR has been asked by the Government to examine this publication.
However, studies conducted in school going children in Delhi Schools, have shown an increase in the prevalence of myopia of 5.7 % over a period of 15 years. This is expected to be lower in rural areas. These studies have shown that similar lifestyle factors are responsible for this increase.
Various initiatives have been taken under National Programme for Control of Blindness (NPCB) and Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) under National Health Mission to address the problem of myopia, which include
i. Screening of school age group children for detection of refractive errors including myopia and providing free spectacles to them under NPCB. As per the data of last three years under NPCB, 8.72 crore school children were screened in the country, out of which 31 lakh children (3.9 %) were found to have refractive errors.
ii. Screening of children for vision impairment under Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karykram (RBSK). This child health screening and early intervention services cover 30 common health conditions for early detection, free treatment and management including vision impairment, which also includes myopia.
iii. Training of school teachers to identify refractive errors and common eye ailments among school children.
iv. Training of eye surgeons in various eye specialties including paediatric ophthalmology to enhance skill level.
v. Undertaking IEC activities to create awareness about preventive measures for eye diseases including myopia.
vi. Setting up of paediatric ophthalmology units and low vision units at Medical Colleges and Regional Institutes of Ophthalmology.
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